



Think you know Special Olympics?

Okay, let's really start to answer the question by dispelling a common misconception by stating what Special Olympics is not. It's not a one-day event.

"When is Special Olympics?", is the most common question asked by people who aren't volunteers or deeply involved in the organization. And the answer to the question is simply, "All the time".

That's right...18 different sports offered throughout the year that involve weeks of training and nearly 200 local, area, and state competition events. There are even national and international games.

With more than 5,000 volunteers coaching and conducting events for children and adults with intellectual disabilities (mental retardation), the lives of 12,500+ special athletes in Tennessee are touched and changed every year. As are the lives of the volunteers and the attitudes of the communities where they live.

Training for Life

In Special Olympics, the individual athlete is the focus of everything we do. Period.

While we pride ourselves on the fact volunteers offer quality training and competition activities for Special Olympics athletes, we constantly remind ourselves that the physi-

cal fitness, good health habits, skills development, self-confidence, and teamwork are the true values we work to instill in every life we touch. These are the basics of leading and living a successful and productive life.



Learn More About Special Olympics

www.specialolympicstn.org

*Mission and Philosophy

*Who are Special Olympics Athletes

*Sports and Competitions

*Locations of Program in Tennessee

*Volunteer Needs & Opportunities

*Unified Sports/Inclusion Programs

*Healthy Athletes Initiatives

*Athlete Leadership Programs

*Contact Information

*Much, much, more....

Now More than Ever

When Special Olympics started in 1968, institutions for people with mental retardation were overflowing. Education, work, independent living, and yes, recreation & sports opportunities were either non-existent or woefully inadequate. Attitudes and expectations for children and adults with mental retardation were low.

As Special Olympics moved out into communities...schools and public recreation programs in particular...and as volunteers from every walk of life encountered these special athletes...attitudes changed and opportunities began to develop.

No, we're not claiming credit for all this change, but the fact remains Special Olympics was the only public program bringing together people with intellectual disabilities and others within communities across the state. Personal encounters breed understanding, acceptance, and opportunity.

And although society and opportunities have moved forward, there are many more young athletes with disabilities coming into the program every year who need the benefits and values obtained through participation in Special Olympics.

Your Support is Needed

Participation has grown by double-digits the past three years, and funding has not kept pace. In 2005, the Division of Mental Retardation cut off Special Olympics grant contract that supported community-based development of programs. Today, Special Olympics in Tennessee is 100% dependent upon charitable gifts.